

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICAE-00

NSCE-00 INRE-00 HA-05 SIL-01 LAB-04 /062 W

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O P 032223Z JUL 78

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7018

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 3019

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, SHUM, ELAB, NU

SUBJECT: CONTINUED TURMOIL IN NICARAGUA

REF: A) MANAGUA 2277, B) MANAGUA 2671, C) MANAGUA 3005, D) MANAGUA
2845, E) MANAGUA 2845

SUMMARY: AS NICARAGUA AWAITS THE ANNOUNCED RETURN OF THE "TWELVE",
PROTEST ACTIVITIES CONTINUE THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. IT IS, AS YET,
UNCLEAR THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE PLANNED AIRPORT ARRIVAL ON JULY 5
MAY CONTRIBUTE TO AN INTENSIFIED LEVEL OF ANTI-GON PROTEST, BUT A
BROAD RANGE OF EVENTS HERE PROVIDES A GOOD BACKDROP AGAINST WHICH
IT IS POSSIBLE TO GAUGE THE LEVEL OF PUBLIC DISAFFECTION WITH THE
GON. NEARLY DAILY, LABOR, STUDENT AND CAMPESINO DISTURBANCES ARE
KEEPING THE CAULDRON BUBBLING. END SUMMARY

1. LABOR: THROUGHOUT JUNE, A PLETHORA OF LABOR ACTIVITY OCCURRED.
MOST NOTABLE WERE DEMANDS FOR SEVERANCE PAY BY FIRED WORKERS IN COR-
INTO, A MINISTRY OF EDUCATION INVESTIGATION INTO WORKING CONDITIONS
IN MANAGUA DRY CLEANING ESTABLISHMENTS, AN OFF AND ON HOSPITAL WOR-
KERS STRIKE OVER MANAGEMENT'S ALLEGED FAILURE TO BARGAIN AND A MAJOR
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STRIKE OF NATIONAL DISTRICT EMPLOYEES. THE MOST SIGNIFICANT, FOR PUR-
POSES OF THIS REPORT, WAS THE NATIONAL DISTRICT STRIKE. THE NATIONAL
DISTRICT MINISTER FIRED SEVERAL EMPLOYEES WHO HE CLAIMED HAD BEEN
USING DISTRICT EQUIPMENT FOR PERSONAL PROFIT AND PILFERING DISTRICT
SUPPLIES. THE UNION, SOME OF WHOSE MEMBERS AMONG THE FIRED, WENT ON
STRIKE WHICH IS PROHIBITED BY THE CONSTITUTION. WHEN THE TWO SIDES
REACHED A STALEMATE IN NEGOTIATIONS, THE MINISTER PUBLICLY DECLARED

THAT BECAUSE THE STRIKE WAS ILLEGAL, ALL CONTRACTS WERE VOID AND ALL EMPLOYEES DISCHARGED. HE THEN AUTHORIZED THE HIRING OF REPLACEMENTS. THE MINISTRY OF LABOR UPHELD THE MINISTER'S VIEW OF THE ILLEGALITY OF THE STRIKE. THE MINISTER SUBSEQUENTLY SOFTENED HIS LINE BY DECLARING THAT WORKERS WITH 20 YEARS SERVICES WOULD RECEIVE RETIREMENTS BENEFITS AND OTHER WORKERS WOULD BE GRADUALLY REHIRED. THE NUMBER OF WORKERS AFFECTED BY THIS ACTION IS ABOUT 200.

2. CAMPESINOS: A CONTINUING LAND PROBLEM IN CHINANDEGA SPREAD TO MANAGUA DURING JUNE (REFTEL C) WHEN A GROUP OF CAMPESINOS OCCUPIED THE ARCHBISHOP'S CURIA. LAND INVASIONS WHICH HAD BEEN OCCURRING IN CHINANDEGA IN APRIL AND MAY LED DIRECTLY TO THE OCCUPATION OF THE CURIA, WHICH LASTED UNTIL RECENTLY. THERE MAY BE A POSSIBLE PARTIAL SOLUTION, BUT THIS ISSUE REMAINS A SOURCE OF FURTHER CONFLICT.

3. STUDENT STRIKES AND OTHER DISTURBANCES: MOST MAJOR CITIES IN NICARAGUA HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY STUDENT STRIKES AND/OR OTHER DISTURBANCES. STUDENT OCCUPATION OF SCHOOLS OVER A VARIETY OF DEMANDS CONTINUES IN AN APPARENTLY UNCOORDINATED FASHION. SOME OF THESE TAKEOVERS HAVE BEEN ENDED BY NATIONAL GUARD (GN) ACTION AND THESE ACTIONS HAVE BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY OCCASIONAL VIOLENCE. AT THE SAME TIME, ALMOST DAILY DEMONSTRATIONS HAVE BEEN OCCURRING ACROSS NICARAGUA.

4. PRESS TENSIONS: THE 60-DAY CLOSING OF RADIO MI PREFERIDA FOR BROADCASTING WHAT THE GON IDENTIFIED AS FALSE AND MALICIOUS REPORTS
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(REFTEL E) HAS BECOME AN ADDITIONAL FOCAL POINT FOR PROTEST ACTIVITY. A GROUP (REPORTEDLY TOTALING 24) COMPOSED OF JOURNALISTS, STUDENTS, CAMPESINOS, AND OTHER ANTI-SOMOZA ORGANIZATIONS (INCLUDING A MAJOR LABOR FEDERATION) IS STAGING A HUNGER STRIKE IN THE RED CROSS OFFICES AND HAS STATED ITS INTENTION TO CONTINUE THE HUNGER STRIKE UNTIL THE CLOSURE ORDER IS OVERTURNED. HOWEVER, ON JULY 1, MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT MORA UPHELD THE RADIO STATION CLOSING.

5. COMMENT:THE VARIOUS STUDENT, LABOR, AND CAMPESINO PROTEST ACTIVITIES APPEAR TO BE LARGELY INCOHERENT, BUT BECOME MUTUALLY REINFORCING. FOR EXAMPLE, STUDENT-GN CONFRONTATIONS HAVE LED TO THE DETENTION OF STUDENTS. THE STUDENTS THEN HAVE A NEW ISSUE TO PROTEST. AT PRESENT, THE STUDENTS ARE PROTESTING NOT ONLY FOR THEIR OWN CAUSES, BUT ALSO FOR THE TEMPORARY CLOSING OF A POPULAR RADIO STATION,CAMPESINO LAND CLAIMS, AND IN SUPPORT OF THE FIRED MUNICIPAL WORKERS. THE SITUATION CONTINUES TO BE TENSE WITH PRESSURE ON THE GON CONTINUING AT A MODERATE LEVEL. THE GN IS BASICALLY ALLOWING EVENTS TO STEER THEIR OWN COURSE, INTERVENING ONLY WHEN DIRECTLY ATTACKED. AGAINST THIS BACKDROP, THE RETURN OF "THE TWELVE" THUS FAR, APPEARS TO BE A CONTROLLABLE EVENT WHICH WILL NOT CREATE THE DENOUEMENT HOPED FOR BY THE EXTREME OPPOSITION IN THE ABSENCE OF ADDITIONAL AGITATION OR CORRESPONDING REPRESSION.

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